37 Harvard Drive
Hartsdale, N. Y. 10530

January 14, 1969

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Route 7
Frederick, Md.

Dear Harold:

In response to your January 7 letter, I can save you a tremendous amount of wasted time and energy on the three tramps. They were not arrested behind the post office, but in a box car near Lee Bowers' tower. I know this by correlating Harkness' testimony Vol. VI page 312, Lee Bower's statement to Mark Lane, "A Citizens Dissent, page 215," Sheriff Harold Elkins report, Vol. XIX page 540, and all seven photos of the tramps, 2 by George Smith, 2 by Jack Beers, and 3 by William Allen.

If you will look at all of the photos in sequence (except Jack Beers' which are not available) and read all of the above references, you will soon see exactly what happened. Harkness arrested them in the box car directly beside the tower and escorted them through the parking lot, down the Elm Street extension, to Houston Street and down Houston to the vehicle entrance to the sheriff's office midway between Elm and Main Streets.

Elkins received them from Harkness and took them to Fritz at the jail. There we lose track of them.

Now one valuable thing you can do, if you really trust the guy in Dallas, have him do the following. Get hold of the booking record for these men, the mug shots and identities. If he claims to know that they were arrested and then released later, then he is a very valuable contact. The reason is that no one, repeat, no one in the Dallas police force, or in the two newspapers has ever admitted that these guys were arrested.

When I questioned the three photographers and their bosses, they either couldn't remember taking the photos, or did remember and said those guys were not under arrest.

Now, here's another idea. Maybe your friend could get to Elkins or Harkness and surely one of them would have noted the names of the three guys. Or how about getting to the cop who was on duty at the city jail booking desk and took down their names. He was probably pretty far down in the organization.

I seriously doubt that Elkins actually turned three winos or tramps over to Fritz himself.

Now, the fact is, Harold, you must know that those men were not just tramps. I'm 100% certain of the identity of two of them as

named in my last letter and 70% certain the third is Bradley. The only major discrepancy is in the ears and a 1963 photo of Bradley indicates those ear protrusions were not there then. Even if it's not Bradley, the identity of the other two as right wing, anti-Castro adventurers and CIA connected guys is going to be well established.

So they are important. Perhaps as important as any other aspect of the assassination. If they are tramps, then let your friend and the Dallas police come up with their names and let's go and talk to them, take their pictures, compare them and prove it once and for all. That ought to be simple. In fact, it's so simple that I'm sure the Dallas police would want to do it in a hurry just to stop all of the rumors.

If Jim's friend who compared Bradley with the tramp had all five available photos, how does he explain the identical scars and the perfect match of all facial features in one of the Wm. Allen photos (that's the first of his three on Houston) against the photo of Bradley at his press conference.

Let me know what you want to do.

Dick

Hart, Eason, Ora

1/18/69

Dear Dick,

As by now you could anticipate, I am not going to N.O.; I have an enormous amount of filing to do to return to an accessible place all the many things I had prepared to take with me. Therefore I make brief response only to your letter of 1/14.

6H321 Harness does not in any way identify the location where the tramps were picked up. He says merely in the yards. 12H540 refers only to "on the yards", which against does not say behind the TSBD or not behind the post office. You also cite "Rush to Judgement", p. 215. This is not on that subject, deals only with Oswald's transfer. I have searched all references to Bowers in this book and none is applicable. The closest thing to relevance cannot, it seems to me, be "correlated" with anything. That is page 43, which is not Lee Bower's statement to Mark Lane" but Mark's paraphrasing, which then says merely "that at least 50 law enforcement officers were engaged in searching the parking lot and railroad yards..."

You cite nothing to support your statement that "Harkness arrested them in the box car directly beside the tower and escorted them through the parking lot, down the Elm Street extension, to Houston Street and down Houston to the vehicle entrance to the sheriff's office..." Can you, by your photos, establish that one of the policemen in these pictures is Harkness?

Ordinarily some of your assumptions would be valid. Under most other conditions, I would assume police or various sorts would tend to keep records of those they handled. Even if Harness made the arrest, under the circumstances I can find more reason for believe he would expect those to whom he turned the men over to make the record. I would be willing to assume that, when Elkins received them, he assumed the record had been made. I agree with your doubt that Elkins made personal delivery to Fritz. With the command of language displayed by those who that day recorded it, I would be inclined to take this to mean to Fritz's bureau, homocide.

To the degree I can I am following this down, by remote. I have no reason to doubt the honesty of my sources, who are rather well placed and not in basic disagreement with my overall view. Those things you suggest that are possible have been in the works since early November. These are busy people who are helping me as they can. I trust both. Neither has any reason to deceive me, ~~[illegible]~~ neither has, to the best of my knowledge. As with the enclosed memo, I will let you know what I learn.

I must confess disappointment that those who were in a position to at least make the effort and who originally sought to make what on the basis of now seems most likely not to be so seem also not to have made any effort at all to what I now have to take time to do. I am confident you realize the potential of the public misuse of this picture. Perhaps, without my awareness, they did make at least perfunctory inquiry of the police. However, I am not aware of this and have no reason to believe this elemental thing was done. When this is the record of a professional, I am even more disturbed. Dick, I urge caution on you in this regard. When we try and place anyone anywhere at any given time, we must be certain it was possible and that the comparison is not with what can be established as someone else. Sorry my hasty language is so much like that of the sheriff's office. I know of nothing further you can now do on this save to wait and see what I can develop. I will let you know.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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Sprague Hoh Coroner Oser
(cont. my 1/18/69)

1/18/69

Memo on "tramp" pictures, Buddy Walthers — Harold Weisberg

I have received information I trust from Dallas that the police in these pictures are EE. Bass, Marvin Wiss and Ray Vaughan, from left to right in the picture that has Vaughan's back to the camera.

These men had wine when picked up, showed signs of having been drinking and reportedly looked as though they had been in the car for a week.

Buddy Walthers was murdered about two weeks ago. I have been told this happened when he went to a motel, to the room in which there were a naked man and a naked women in bed, that in the rather virgorous fight that ensued this man got a gun and killed Walthers and, with another officer, was himself injured. Both are expected to survive. This man was an escapee from Atlanta, where he had been serving a life term, and is a reported narcotics addict. There seems to have been little public attention to this.

I expect further information on these men and the conditions and location of their arrest or whatever really happened to them.

One of my sources, who is in a position to get information from some of those involved, reports they have a clear recollection on what is inconsistent with what Dick Sprague has reconstructed from the evidence. The new information above does not contain a pinpointing of what is clouded.

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